

Sūrah 84

Al-Inshiqāq

(The Rending Asunder)

(Makkan Period)

Title

The *Sūrah*'s title is based on its opening word, *inshaqqat*, of which the root word *inshiqāq* stands for the rending asunder of something. This *Sūrah* is so known because it informs man of the rending asunder of the sky on the Last Day.

Period of Revelation

This too, is one of the *Sūrahs* revealed in the early days of the Makkan period. It appears from its contents that the phase of physical torture of the Muslims had not by then begun. However, the call to Islam was openly derided and rejected in Makkah. The concept of the Hereafter was ridiculed and the Makkans denied altogether that one day they would have to appear before Allah for rendering their accounts.

Subject Matter and Themes

The Last Day and the Hereafter are the *Sūrah*'s main subject matter.

AL-INSHIQĀQ (The Rending Asunder)

Verses 1-5 portray the scene on the Last Day and affirm this reality. These verses proclaim that on that Day the sky shall be rent asunder; the earth shall be stretched out, and it will cast out what is within it (i.e. parts of dead bodies and evidence of man's actions). All this will happen in accordance with the command of the Lord of the sky and the earth. Being created entities they cannot dare disobey Him. They will readily hearken to the command of their Lord.

Verses 6-19 assert that man has been, consciously or unconsciously, on his way to meet His Lord. On the Day of Reckoning, human beings will be placed into two groups: (1) Those who will be given their record in their right hands and they will attain deliverance after being called to an easy accounting. (2) Those who will be given their record behind their backs. They will wish for death, yet they will enter the blazing fire. They will be punished for the mistaken belief that they would never revert to their Lord. However, their Lord watched all their actions. They were, thus, bound to face divine reckoning. Their punishment is as certain and inevitable as the setting of the sun or the alternation of day and night or the crescent reaching its fullness.

The unbelievers are given the tiding of painful chastisement for their crime of calling the Qur'ān a lie, rather than prostrating themselves before Allah as they should have done. The believers who do good deeds are promised an unending reward.